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# Newsletter

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## GRADUATE SCHOOL ★ USDA

January 18, 1957

To the Faculty, Committee Members and others associated with the Graduate School:

"Human life is going to depend on plant life for a long time yet, and in far more ways than its value as an efficient conversion agent. In a world losing so many natural habitats by insidious as well as direct attack, scientific opinion is going to influence governments to undertake fundamental ecological investigations as part of a survival policy."

The foregoing is from a thoughtful article by F. Fraser Darling in the 1955-56 winter issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. We quote it because it underscores the importance of the subject of our first series of lectures for 1957 -- "Conservation of our Natural Resources."

We hope you can attend all six of the lectures. They will be given in the Jefferson auditorium of the South Building, USDA, at 3:00 p.m. The dates, subjects, and speakers are as follows:

January 23 - What is Resource Conservation? by C. M. Granger, formerly assistant chief, USDA Forest Service.

January 30 - In the Great Plains, by R. B. Tootell, governor of the Farm Credit Administration.

February 6 - In the South, by Warren T. White, industrial department of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad.

February 13 - Water Resources, by Edward A. Ackerman, director of the water resources program, Resources for the Future, Inc.

February 20 - Surpluses and Conservation, to be announced.

February 27 - The Role of the Individual and the Role of the Public in Resource Conservation, George M. Dykhuizen, Professor of Philosophy, University of Vermont.

To mark your calendar well in advance, here are the dates, the titles, the speakers for our second lecture series of 1957, "The Influence of Rural Life on American Culture."

March 6 - Music, Donald Levitt of the Library of Congress

March 13- Literature, Russell Lord

March 20- Drama, Paul Green, University of North Carolina

March 27- Education, Howard Dawson, National Education Association

April 3 - Religion, Carol C. Taylor

April 10- Politics, Bushrod Allin

We will have more details in the February NEWSLETTER.

We went "brain storming" last month for new ideas to further the Graduate School program. Our results in this first effort at creative group thinking were on a par with the experiences that have been reported by other groups.

We came up with 158 suggestions in four sessions with instructors and committee members from six Departments (we combined the Departments of Biological and Physical Sciences for one session and the Departments of Public Administration and Office Techniques for another.)

The 158 ideas include some duplicates. There are many that are impractical in our present situation. Some have value for exploratory purposes. And others have great merit and can be acted upon within the coming year.

The wide range of these unevaluated ideas can be seen in suggestions for courses like these: Astronomy -- interplanetary era; The joys of living -- wines, gourmet foods, and other helps for hostesses; Science fiction; Automation as a general field; Psychology of management functions.

The scientists asked for courses that will help workers keep abreast of developments in fast moving fields. These would cover recent advances in physiology, nutrition, entomology, cytogenetics, and plant pathology. Along with these, the scientists asked for courses that break down the barriers and cut across the line of various disciplines, such as comparative biochemistry and comparative biophysics.

There were suggestions for additional certificates of accomplishment -- in research writing, in literature, and in semantics. The suggestion that courses be set up during working hours was followed by the idea that the Graduate School could serve as a training ground for agricultural attaches.

We have begun to screen these ideas and will draw upon them in the future. One outcome of the sessions was the comment from many of the participants that the "brain storming" idea be more widely used in Graduate School affairs.

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At our faculty luncheon in December, we were privileged to hear a stimulating talk by Mrs. Agnes E. Meyer, distinguished journalist and commentator, on the role of public school education in preparing young people for their responsibilities in the future. She outlined the philosophy which the public school must develop to produce citizens of a humane world. These ideas are elaborated in Mrs. Meyer's new book, "Education For A New Morality", published by Macmillan. The book is the 29th volume in the Kappa Delta Pi lecture series. If you would like a copy, Miss Jensen will be glad to place your order.

We are watching an experiment in Philadelphia with a view to using the findings here, if they prove applicable. That is the course in executive development that was begun this year, on an experimental basis, in the program for Federal personnel at Temple University.

The program, as we have reported in previous issues of the Newsletter, is a cooperative venture with the Graduate School, the Philadelphia Federal Personnel Council, and the School of Business and Public Administration as co-sponsors. It was begun in the spring of 1955 and is directed by Chairman Raymond S. Short of the Political Science Department at Temple.

Dr. Short reports that 157 people enrolled this year for courses in Federal Accounting, Organization and Management, Procurement and Property Management, and Personnel Administration.

The seminar for Federal Executives was arranged at the request of leaders in various agencies. It is under the direction of George M. Cohen, chief of the training section of the Signal Corps Supply Agency. Enrollment is limited to 20 Federal employees in middle or top management posts. Interest in this first seminar will be the basis for planning additional seminars in an executive development plan.

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We were pleased to find our newsletter listed as one of 10 that showed effective writing on the whole in a study of 88 college house organs made by Dorothy Stout, a student in the University of Missouri School of Journalism.

Miss Stout's objective was "to find how the house organ is being used on the campuses of this country, to show something of the purposes and values accorded this medium, and to reveal pertinent facts about the organization and nature of these publications."

Her findings were based on a questionnaire and three issues each of 88 publications slanted specifically to faculty or faculty-staff readership. She noted that the house organ, a commonplace in industry -- and we might add in government -- are relatively new on college campuses. Though one house organ considered in this study goes back to 1916, most of them have been established since 1948 when growing enrollments and faculties have made it necessary for college administrators to turn to house organs to keep the staff informed of new developments.

In her summary, Miss Stout indicates that college newsletters do not measure up to industrial standards. "Roughly one-half of the campus organs appear, in any noticeable degree, to inform personnel at all levels on matters more significant than personals, calendar listings, and routine work instructions. Sample issues of nearly one-half of the publications reflect a lack of administrative attention. They fail to inform readers of administrative thinking or action on such vital matters as curriculum development, budget, and policies."

It would be interesting to know what part of the publications issued by the Federal government have been edited by people who trained in this field in the Graduate School.

We know that many editorial posts throughout government are held by our former students. And we know the courses in editing, taught for many years by the late M. C. Merrill, have consistently drawn large enrollments.

We had occasion to meet the students in this year's classes in editing, Monday evening, December 17, when Mrs. Norma Hughes, who serves as executive secretary for the classes, invited us to their annual Christmas banquet. Harry Mileham, chief of publications in USDA's Office of Information, presided and was assisted by other instructors on the staff -- F. L. Erhardt, Catherine F. George, Geniana R. Edwards, Harold B. Simpson, Dennis S. Feldman, and Jerome H. Permutter.

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Albert V. Carlin, who teaches Elementary Dynamic Meteorology, has tried something new this year - evaluation of each class session by the students. The 18 men and two women in his class have filled in but not signed a mimeographed questionnaire indicating what they liked and disliked about the presentation and discussion each time. The device helped the teacher plan and conduct the classes to meet the needs of the students and it has resulted in more student satisfaction in course, Mr. Carlin reports.

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Joseph P. Loftus has been named acting head of an office of administrative management under the direction of Ralph S. Roberts, Administrative Assistant Secretary in the Department of Agriculture.

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O. B. Conaway Jr., Assistant Director, represented the Graduate School at the graduation ceremony for Government employees in special programs at New York University, January 8 and delivered a short address. The program for Federal employees in the New York area has met with so much interest that NYU has expanded it from two to three semesters each year.

Sincerely,



T. Roy Reid  
Director